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FM AMEMBASSY YEREVAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6230
INFO RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 1304

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SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [AM](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT, FOREIGN MINISTER, AND OPPOSITION LEADER
CONGRATULATE GUL ON TURKISH PRESIDENCY

¶1. (U) President Robert Kocharian took time out from his Greek vacation to send a congratulatory message to new Turkish President Abdullah Gul. As Kocharian is abroad on a private trip, details of the message were unavailable in Yerevan. Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian sent his own letter of congratulations to President Gul. which was released to the public.

¶2. (SBU) Meanwhile, opposition Heritage Party leader and possible presidential candidate Raffi Hovannisian sent a longer letter, in which he attempted to foreshadow rapprochement with Turkey, while at the same time laying down oblique markers about "genocide" recognition. COMMENT: The somewhat tortured wording serves Hovanissian's political strategy, which dangles the promise that a "legitimately elected" Armenian leader would have sufficient stature to achieve normal relations with Turkey while also upholding Armenians' claims for historical acknowledgement. END COMMENT) Both Oskanian's and Hovannisian's letters were transmitted in English.

¶3. FULL TEXT OF FM OSKANIAN LETTER:

Dear Mr. President,

Please accept my sincere congratulations on your election to the high office of President of the Republic of Turkey.

I appreciated our encounters as colleagues and wish you good health and boundless energy. There is much work to be done in this region, and I am sure you will bring your contribution to global peace and prosperity.

Sincerely,
/s/
Vartan Oskanian

¶4. FULL TEXT OF HOVANNISIAN LETTER:

Dear Mr. President,

Please accept my congratulations on your election to this most responsible position at an equally critical crossroads for our nations and their neighborhood.

It is to be hoped that, during your tenure and that of the next Armenian president to be elected in several months time, Turkish-Armenian relations will enter a wholly new phase of reflection, exploration, discovery, and ultimate normalization. The can be done not only by virtue of high statesmanship and creative diplomacy, but on the basis of sincere mutual contemplation of the future anchored in a brave and unprecedented assumption of history.

Turkey, Armenia, and the nature of their relationship are pivotal to the potential of real security and cooperation in the broader region. The deep divides between our countries, be they of contemporary character or part of the legacy of the Great Armenian Dispossession, must be overcome and resolved in truth, with integrity, and through the partnership of the two new leaders and their fellow citizens of good faith and conscience.

May God grant you the vision, commitment, and health to achieve that day.

Very truly yours,
/s/
Raffi K. Hovannisian

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